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## N. C. 3'S FLIGHT

Account by Commander London of Arrival of Navy Seaplane at Azores Islands On Trans-Ocean Flight.

The editor is giving below extracts from a letter received this week from his brother, J. J. London, who is Commander on the cruiser Columbia. The Columbia was stationed at Horta, Azores Islands, as one of the links in the chain of war vessels that stretched across the Atlantic to aid the three Navy planes in their attempted flight across the ocean. The N-C 3 (Navy-Curtiss plane No. 3) was the only one of the four to complete the trip across. Each plane was equipped with four Liberty motors of 400 h. p. per motor, and averaged 80 miles per hour. They had a lifting power of 30,000 pounds, and each has carried on test trips as many as 51 passengers. The planes are 150 feet from tip to tip.

In view of the interest surrounding the flight of these airships, the following personal letter may be interesting:

"U. S. S. Columbia,  
Horta, Azores Islands.  
Sat. May 17th, 1919.

"This was a memorable day in the history of American Aeronautics. The N-C 1, N-C 3 and N-C 4 left Trepassy Bay, Newfoundland, the preceding night at 6:10 p. m., and flew by full moonlight all night over a line of destroyers stretched out, 50 miles apart, towards the Azores.

"The first news we received on the Columbia at Horta was about 7:00 o'clock in the morning reporting all 3 planes having passed a position about 500 miles from Horta. From then on, during the day, we intercepted radio reports from the station ships and from the planes themselves. About 10:30 we intercepted a report from the N-C 4, that she had sighted land (probably the island of Corvo.) The weather was rainy and a heavy mist and fog had set in, which caused us much uneasiness for the safety of the planes. Finally at 12:23 a shout went up from the decks of the Columbia and the N-C 4 was seen to emerge from the mist and fog around the promontory at the northern end of the harbor. Our Motor Gig was alongside the gangway and I jumped into it with several blue-jackets and met the plane as it landed at 12:25, two hundred yards astern of the ship. We gave the plane a line and towed it up to the ship where it was secured. We took the passengers off with the gig. I was the first to shake hands and congratulate the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander A. C. Read. As the 5 Officers and 1 Chief Petty Officer composing the crew came aboard, cheers by the crew of the Columbia greeted them. They had been 15 hours, 18 minutes in the flight from Newfoundland; had not slept during that time and were very much fatigued. They were well protected from the weather by clothing, but seemed to be quite chilled.

"They reported that they had seen nothing of the other two planes since shortly after leaving Newfoundland the night before, but had heard the Destroyers reporting their passing the different positions. Their night passage was very pleasant, bright moonlight and clear. They flew at an altitude of about 2000 feet and had a favoring wind the entire distance, averaging over the water 83 knots per hour. About 10:00 a. m. they ran into thick weather and at times heavy fog banks. They expressed it as very lucky that they were able to pick up the Island of Fayal as they did. They actually landed 2 or 3 miles to the northward of

the port of Horta, as the city was shut off from their view by high promontory. They rose from the water again and proceeding a few minutes to the southward, they sighted the city of Horta, and landed as described above.

"The N-C 4 was in perfect condition for a continued flight, with a sufficient supply of gasoline and oil to reach Punta Delgada, 150 miles further. The Commander expressed his desire to continue the flight that afternoon if the fog lifted. However, as the afternoon passed on and the weather conditions did not improve, the N-C 4 was taken into the inner harbor and moored to a buoy previously planted for the purpose. The crew of the N-C 4 then relaxed and stretched out into a profound sleep due to the intense strain which had been upon them.

"During the forenoon, we received reports which indicated that the N-C 1 was not far behind the N-C 4. They evidently encountered the same heavy fog and finally sent a message that they were forced to land on account of the fog, somewhere near the island of Corvo.

"The NC3 was not heard from after passing a position about 200 miles to the north-eastward of Fayal. Heard at 5 p. m. May 19th, that NC3 arrived at Punta Delgado, 150 miles to s. e. of us, under its own power. Evidently had to land on the 17th and motored in like a boat. NC4 left for Punta Delgado 11:44 a. m. May 20th.

"The NC1 was sighted by the Greek steamer 'IONIA' about

6:00 p. m., on the 17th; the crew taken aboard and the plane taken in tow. Soon afterward however, the line parted and a Destroyer coming up, the plane was left behind, one of the wings being damaged by the sea. The IONIA proceeded to Horta where it arrived at 3 p. m., 18th and the crew were brought aboard the COLUMBIA. Lieutenant Commander Beilinger was in command of the NC1. He reported that upon encountering the heavy fog, he went up to a higher altitude to escape it, but the fog increased in density and they became very much confused as to their position, having no way to determine the direction of the wind at that altitude. He came down lower, and flew for some time nearer the water and having lost track of his position, as regards the line of destroyers, he decided to alight on the water, which appeared sufficiently smooth and use his radio direction finder while on the water, but was unable to locate ships as he had hoped. The sea was rougher than he had anticipated and a pontoon on one wing became damaged, so that he was unable to rise again. In order to keep the plane from sinking, the crew had to climb out on the wing of the plane to balance it. In this precarious position they hung on for 5 hours, before being picked up by the Greek steamer. At that time they were in a very exhausted condition, wet through and chilled."

"The Lightning Raider," with Pearl Whitt at The Opera House Monday, June 23rd.

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